IN THE CLAIMS:

Kindly amend claims 6-8, and 12-15 as follows. Also, kindly add new claims 18 and 19. All of the claims currently in the case are set forth below together with their status.

1. (Withdrawn) A membrane for separating plasma or serum from blood, having a porosity of not more than 30%.

2. (Withdrawn) The plasma or serum separating membrane according to claim 1, wherein a plurality of through holes are provided so as to penetrate from one side to the other side of the membrane.

3. (Withdrawn) The plasma or serum separating membrane according to claim 2, wherein diameters of the through holes fall within the range of 0.05 to 2.0 μm.

4. (Withdrawn) The plasma or serum separating membrane according to claim 1, wherein mean surface roughness of the membrane is not more than 100 nm.

5. (Withdrawn) The plasma or serum separating membrane according to claim 1, used as a corpuscle blocking membrane for preventing contamination by corpuscles.

6. (Currently Amended) A filter apparatus comprising:

a first filter member through which plasma can move faster than corpuscles; said first filter member having an upstream and downstream part and having a packing density of a downstream part higher than a packing density of an upstream part in the filter member; and a plasma or serum separating membrane for separating plasma or serum from blood, said separating membrane having a porosity of not more than 30%, and being ~~according to claim 1~~, serially connected in a subsequent stage with the first filter member.

7. (Currently Amended) The filter apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the filter member serves as a first filter member, the plasma or serum separating membrane serves as a second filter member, and a third filter member made of fiber having a mean fiber diameter of not less than 3.0 μm and a bulk density of not more than 0.3 g/cm^3 is provided ~~in precedent stage~~ upstream of the first filter member.

8. (Currently Amended) The filter apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the first filter member is made of fiber, and the mean fiber diameter is from 0.2 to 3.0 μm and the filled density is from 0.1 to 0.5 g/cm^3.

9. (Withdrawn) A filter apparatus comprising:

a container body having an opening at its one end;

a cylindrical member attached to the opening of the container body in liquid-tight manner;

a first filter member placed in the cylindrical member, through which plasma can move faster than corpuscles; and

a second filter member comprising the membrane for separating plasma or serum from blood according to claim 1, serially connected with the first filter member in subsequent stage in the cylindrical member;

wherein the first and the second filter members are disposed in a filter accommodation part, a blood accommodation part is formed in precedent stage of the filter accommodation part, and a plasma or serum storage part is formed on the downstream side of the filter accommodation part.

10. (Withdrawn) The filter apparatus according to claim 9, further comprising:

a third filter member provided in precedent stage of the first filter member, made of fiber having a mean fiber diameter of not less than 3.0 μm and a bulk density of not more than 0.3 g/cm^3.

11. (Previously Presented) The filter apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the first filter member through which plasma can move faster than corpuscles has a property of adsorbing fibrinogen contained in blood, plasma or a fibrinogen solution.

12. (Currently Amended) The filter apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the filter apparatus further comprises a container having an internal space therein; and an anticoagulant component is stored in at least a part of the internal space of the filter apparatus where filter members are accommodated or an upstream side of the part in the internal space.

13. (Currently Amended) The filter apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the filter apparatus further comprises a container having an internal space therein; and an accelerator for accelerating coagulation of blood is stored in at least a part of the internal space downstream of the filter members in the internal space.

14. (Currently Amended) The filter apparatus according to claim [[6]] 7, wherein a blood accommodation part is provided at an upstream side of the first and second filter members; and an aqueous solution having an osmotic pressure of 200 to 300 mOsm/kg is added to at least a part of the section from a blood accommodation part to the first and the second filter members.

15. (Currently Amended) ~~A blood testing container~~ The filter apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the aqueous solution contains an internal standard substance.

16. (Withdrawn) The filter apparatus according to claim 9, wherein a volume ratio of the blood accommodation part, filter accommodation part and plasma or serum storage part is in the range of 0.5-2:1:1-10.

17. (Previously Presented) A blood testing container including the filter apparatus according to claim 6, wherein a strip of immunochromatographical diagnostic agent to be added to the separated plasma or serum is stored in the blood testing container.

Please add new claims 18 and 19 as follows:

18. (New) The filter apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said first filter member is made of polyester-based resin.

19. (New) The filter apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said first filter member is made of polyester-based resin.

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Kindly replace the second paragraph on page 19 with the following paragraph:

Consequently, as shown in Fig. 3, by pressing the reduced smaller-diameter portion 11c into the cylindrical member 3, and pressing the intermediate portion 11b into the container body 2 via the opening [[3a]] 2a of the container body 2, the cylindrical member 3 is fixedly disposed in the container body 2.

Kindly replace the second full paragraph on page 22 with the following paragraph:

Alternative to the procedure of using the piston 26, plasma or serum can be separated by suctioning from the side of the tip end 22a of the syringe 22. For example, by attaching an injection needle to the tip end of the syringe 22 and piercing a plug member of a vacuum blood collection tube (not shown) with the injection needle, plasma or serum is collected in a first internal space A, and can be suctioned from the side of the tip end of the syringe and collected in the vacuum blood collection tube.

Kindly replace the last paragraph bridging pages 24 and 25 with the following paragraph:

On the other hand, fitted into the plug member 47 is a flow channel 49 connected to a constant pressure suction pump 48. As shown in Fig. 8, by driving the constant pressure suction pump 48 after blood [[A]] collected in a first internal space C is supplied into the syringe 42, the internal

space of the storage container 46 is depressurized to cause suctioning of the blood. The suctioned blood sequentially passes through the third filter member 25, the first filtering member 23 and the second filter member 24, and separated plasma or serum is finally collected into the storage container 45.

Kindly replace the third full paragraph on page 27 with the following paragraph:

The cylindrical member 63 is hermetically fixed to the container body 62 by being screwed into the opening 62a of the container body 62. For achieving this fixation, a male screw 63a which meshes with the female screw 62b is formed on the outer periphery in the lower part of the cylindrical member 63.

Kindly replace the last paragraph bridging pages 28 and 29 with the following paragraph:

In the cylindrical member 63, a filter apparatus 66 is disposed. The filter apparatus 66 has such a structure that the aforementioned first filter member [[23]] 67 and the second filter member [[24]] 68 are serially connected.

Kindly replace the second full paragraph on page 29 with the following paragraph:

In the present embodiment, the blood collection container made up of the container body 62 and the cylindrical member 63 has a first internal space A and a second internal space B in the container. Specifically, a filter 66 consisting of the first filter member [[23]] 67 and the second filter member [[24]] 68 is disposed at the boundary between the first internal space A and the

second internal space B. In the second space B, a blood testing agent strip 64 is disposed. In the present invention, the blood testing agent strip 64 is disposed so that it extends in the vertical direction and a specimen supplying part 64a is on the side of its upper end in the container body 62.

Kindly replace the last paragraph bridging pages 30 and 31 with the following paragraph:

In conducting a blood test, the plug member 65 is pierced with a vacuum blood collection needle. At this time, since the internal space of the blood testing container 61 is depressurized, blood passes the vacuum blood collection needle and introduced to the first space A of the blood testing container 61. After blood is collected, the blood is supplied to the first filter member [[23]] 67 where plasma or serum moves faster than corpuscles, and the plasma or serum is quickly introduced to the second filter member [[24]] 68. In the second filter member [[24]] 68, plasma or serum passes through the aforementioned through holes 68a, and is supplied to the specimen supplying part 64a of the blood testing agent strip 64 via the plasma or serum dropping part 63c. This filtration of blood rapidly proceeds by the pressure difference between the first internal space A and the second internal space B.

Kindly replace the first full paragraph on page 31 with the following paragraph:

In other words, after collecting blood by means of the vacuum blood collection needle, the plug member is pierced with a blood collection needle or the like to allow communication

between the external and the internal space A. This reduces the degree of depressurization to generate a pressure difference between the first internal space A and the second internal space B. Owing to this pressure difference, namely the residual pressure in the second internal space, the filtration proceeds quickly. Then, as the through holes 68a of the second filter member [[24]] 68 are clogged with erythrocytes, the filtration ends.

Kindly replace the second full paragraph on page 33 with the following paragraph:

Also in the second blood testing container 80, since the internal space is depressurized in advance, after piercing the plug body with a vacuum blood collection needle and collecting blood as is the case of the blood testing container [[61]] 80, filtration of the blood automatically proceeds upon piercing of the plug member with a conducting jig[[, and]]. The blood then flows into filters 76 comprising a first filter 77 and a second filter 78. Below the cylindrical container 83 is formed a plasma or serum dropping part 83c so as to project downward. ~~plasma~~ Plasma or serum ~~serving~~ serves as a specimen and is supplied to side 74a of the blood testing agent strip [[64]] 74. Accordingly, it is possible to safely complete the operation from the collection of blood to the blood test as is the case of the blood testing container 61 without requiring a centrifuge separator or a centrifuge operation.